

Message Text

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EXDIS HANDLE AS NODIS

FROM LOW

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, RH, UK, US
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: CONVERSATIONS WITH MUGABE AND VIEIRA

1. GRAHAM AND I MET FOR ABOUT AN HOUR WITH ROBERT MUGABE, WHO WAS ACCOMPANIED ONLY BY EDGAR TEKERE. WE BRIEFLY REVIEWED THE PROPOSAL FOR AN UNANNOUNCED MEETING OF PRINCIPALS. MUGABE ASKED WHAT DATE WE HAD IN MIND AND SAID HE COULD NOT MAKE THE JULY 29/30 DATE BECAUSE OF PREVIOUS COMMITMENT AT THE NONALIGNED CONFERENCE IN BELGRADE.

2. MUGABE ASKED THE BASIS OF THIS CONFERENCE. HE MADE CLEAR HE STILL HELD TO THE PATRIOTIC FRONT POSITION AT DAR THAT THE EXCLUSIVE SUBJECT OF CONVERSATION WOULD BE THE INDEPENDENCE CONSTITUTION. WE SAID THAT WE COULD NOT GUARANTEE THAT OTHER SUBJECTS WOULD NOT BE RAISED. HE SAID HE WOULD DISCUSS THIS MATTER WITH JOSHUA NKOMO BUT FOR THE TIME BEING HE HELD TO THEIR POSITION.

3. MUAGBE DISMISSED THE POSSIBILITY OF A MEETING AT
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A HUNTING LODGE IN BOTSWANA LIKE TULI. IT WAS TOO CLOSE TO THE RHODESIAN BORDER, HE SAID, AND HE COULD NOT TAKE THE SECURITY RISK INVOLVED. HE HAD NO ALTERNATE SUGGESTIONS BUT AGREED TO GRAHAM'S PROPOSAL OF PRESIDENT KAUNDA'S GUEST HOUSE AT LUANGWE IN ZAMBIA

4. WE EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF PRESERVING THE

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5. MUGABE IS LEAVING EARLY NEXT WEEK FOR KHARTOUM AND WILL NOT RETURN HERE UNTIL AUGUST. IT WAS AGREED THAT HE AND NKOMO WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH OUR REPRESENTATIVES IN KHARTOUM OR BELGRADE. DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO SEND INSTRUCTIONS AS APPROPRIATE, THOUGH THE CONTACT IS LIKELY TO BE WITH THE BRITISH.

6. AFTER THE MEETING GRAHAM AND I CALLED BRIEFLY ON SERGIO VIEIRA, REPORTING ITS RESULTS TO HIM AS WELL AS EXPRESSING OUR APPRECIATION FOR HIS HELP. WE RE-EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF MOVING AHEAD WITH AS EARLY A DATE AS POSSIBLE AND THE NEED FOR SECRECY. I SAID THAT WE MAY FIND THAT WE WANTED TO DISCUSS THE SUBSTANCE OF THE MATTER WITH THEM ONCE MORE BEFORE MEETING TOOK PLACE. AS WE SAW IT, A SOLUTION COULD BE BASED EITHER ON AGREEMENT BETWEEN ALL THE PARTIES ON SOME KIND OF A GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY WHICH MIGHT ENTAIL POSTPONEMENT OF ELECTIONS, OR, ALTERNATIVELY, SOMETHING BASED ON THE PRINCIPLES OF THE ANGLO AMERICAN PROPOSAL WITH A NEUTRAL ADMINISTRATOR AND AN EARLY ELECTION. IN THE LATTER CASE THE MAJOR PROBLEM WOULD REVOLVE AROUND DIVISION OF VOTING STRENGTH IN THE GOVERNING COUNCIL. EACH SIDE WAS NOW DEMANDING
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A MAJORITY. THE ONLY POSSIBLE COMPROMISE WE COULD SEE WAS PARITY. VIEIRA SAID HE ENTIRELY AGREED, PROVIDED WHAT WE WERE TALKING ABOUT WAS PARITY BETWEEN THE PATRIOTIC FRONT ON ONE SIDE AND THE PRESENT SALISBURY GROUP ON THE OTHER. WE CONFIRMED THIS UNDERSTANDING.

7. COMMENT: WE BELIEVE WE HAVE MADE A MAJOR STEP FORWARDED AND THAT MUGABE HAS AGREED IN PRINCIPLE TO THE KIND OF CONFERENCE WE HAVE IN MIND. THE MOZAMBIQUEICANS ARE FULLY BEHIND US WILL PROVIDE FIRM SUPPORT.
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